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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2737

October 27, 1995

USDA ISSUES LATS -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (October 25) issued its Long-Term Agricultural Trade Strategy (LATS) report that will serve as a guide for increasing U.S. agricultural exports into the next century. The strategy emphasizes new outreach efforts to provide strategic market information to smaller and new-to-market enterprises; innovative public-private partnerships to execute promotional strategies for key products in targeted markets; reducing and countering unfair foreign trade measures; trade policy initiatives to open new markets and improve market access and ensuring long-term benefits to the rural and national economy. Contact: Marlene Phillips (202) 720-2061.

STUDY ASSESSES IMPACT OF RAILCAR AVAILABILITY -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman (October 24) released a report analyzing the effect railcar shortages have on the ability of U.S. farmers to consistently supply grain to world buyers and generate reasonable returns for their production. "Farmers and grain shippers across the Midwest are experiencing problems with railcar availability, which can substantially lower the price that farmers receive for their crops and reduce U.S. competitiveness in the world," Glickman said. The study uses empirical data to evaluate the effect of railcar availability on grain price spreads between the U.S. and export markets during 1986-89. Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.

USDA ANNOUNCES RURAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (October 24) announced a major overhaul of the country's largest housing financing program for rural Americans. Regulations will reduce the cost of the program so it can reach more rural families and will give borrowers greater choice in selecting a home that fits their needs. Families will be expected to contribute a higher proportion of income toward their mortgage payment. The Section 502 home ownership program provides below-market financing to rural families with incomes up to 80 percent of median income. Contact: Eileen McMahon (202) 720-1255.

COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSED HACCP RULE EXTENDED -- The deadline for comments on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposed rule on "Pathogen Reduction: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems" has been extended to Monday, November 13. The comment period is extended beyond its current October 30 deadline to include in the administrative record the transcript of the food safety forum Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman is holding on Wednesday, November 8. Contact: Ken Rabben (202) 720-9113.

USDA ANNOUNCES DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS -- Producers in 42 Ohio counties are eligible for USDA farm emergency loans because of crop losses they may have suffered due to extensive rains, high winds and hail that occurred in June. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman approved disaster designations for nine counties in Ohio for crop losses that occurred this summer. Farmers and ranchers in these and 33 other counties, have eight months to apply for emergency loans to help cover part of their actual crop losses. To be eligible, they must have suffered a 30-percent loss of normal production. Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.

TESTS FOR NEW MEAT PROCESSING PROCEDURE APPROVED -- USDA announced (October 20) the approval of commercial trials for an innovative process to remove hair and external contamination from cattle in slaughter plants. Dehairing the animal before removing its hide should greatly reduce the potential for contamination of the meat during slaughter. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service has approved a protocol for trial use of the chemical dehairing of cattle in a beef slaughter plant owned by Monfort, Inc., a division of Con Agra. Monfort intends to have a dehairing facility ready for operation early in 1996. The trial at Monfort will be conducted for a period of about one year. **Contact: Steve Lombardi (202) 720-9113.**

USDA REMINDS PRODUCERS OF NATIONWIDE ELECTIONS -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman (October 20) reminded producers of elections to be held November 24 to December 4 by mail ballot to elect approximately 3,000 new Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committees for specific agricultural counties or areas. The committees, consisting of three to five members, depending on the size of the area served, administer farm programs such as commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster payments, crop insurance and farm ownership and operating loans on a county or community basis. Nominations must be received by the county FSA office by October 30. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

PAINTINGS BY CHINESE FARMERS EXHIBITED -- An exhibit of paintings by Chinese farmers will be on display at the National Agricultural Library (NAL) beginning October 26 and continuing through the month of November. The artwork is being loaned to NAL for display by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. The exhibit will open with an official ceremony at NAL on October 26, beginning at 4 p.m. The Chinese name of the artform is "Tianjin Yangliuqing Wood-Block New Year Painting" and its origins date back to the sixteenth century. **Contact: Brian Norris (301) 504-6778.**

USDA AND GSA ANNOUNCE EXECUTIVE EXCHANGE -- In another step designed to bring GSA's programs and top officials closer to its customers, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, and General Services Administration Administrator Roger W. Johnson announced (October 20) an "executive exchange" of two key players in the federal government's telecommunications arena. On Oct. 30, John Okay, who is currently the director of USDA's office of information resources management (IRM), will become the new deputy commissioner for GSA's federal telecommunications service, which provides voice, data, video conferencing, and wireless telecommunications services to federal agencies nationwide. At the same time, Don Hardesty, who was GSA's deputy commissioner for local telecommunications service, will become acting IRM director for USDA. **Contact: Martha Cashion (202) 720-3310.**

FAX -- For radio and TV programming information and the **Broadcasters Letter** through your facsimile machine, call USDA's AgNewsFax. Use the telephone connected to your FAX machine to call **(202)690-3944**. At voice prompts press 1, press 4, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press **9200**; radio newsline information, press **9250**, TV contents billboard, press **9260**, TV scripts, press **9270**. After all your selections, then press #, press 3, and press the **start** button on your FAX machine.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 2004 --More and more of the world goes to bed hungry at night due to rising populations and poor food supplies. In this edition of AGRICULTURE USA, Leslie Parker explores different ways are explored to feed the hungry of the world from scientific discovery to "gleaning." (**Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary**).

CONSUMER TIME # 1483 -- USDA overhauls its rural housing program. Lullaby time for trees and shrubs. Palm Beach County floods could impact consumer vegetable prices. Cleaning up the waters. Better school lunches. (**Weekly cassette -- consumer features**).

AGRITAPE# 1996 -- Long Term Trade Strategy. Farm trade surplus growing. Pork bellies trading strong. Tough time for cattle industry. Spending cuts could hurt rural elderly. (**Weekly cassette -- news features**).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, November 1, world horticultural trade. Tuesday, November 7, weekly weather and crop report. Wednesday, November 8, world agricultural supply and demand. Thursday, November 9, cotton world markets and trade, world agricultural supply and demand. Friday, November 10, FEDERAL HOLIDAY. These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on the Earth Team. This volunteer program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service helps the agency provide essential services in local communities aimed at improving and protecting water and soil resources.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman issues Long-Term Agricultural Trade Strategy (LATS) that will serve as guide for increasing U.S. agricultural exports into the next century. USDA economist Tom Capehart reports the latest figures on agricultural trade. USDA economist Ron Gustafson discusses retail prices for holiday turkey and U.S. beef trade. USDA economist Nathan Childs highlights an expanding demand in the U.S. aquaculture industry.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS: Thursdays at 3:45-4:00 p.m. ET on Telstar 303, Transponder 5H(horizontal), Channel 10, Downlink Frequency 3900 MHz, Audio, 6.2/6.8.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202)720-6072, or write to: Room 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

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